

Note Sheet No. 19

July 15th, 1945.

THE ORIGINAL RUSSELL BROS. CIRCUS - Season 1913  
As told to Cliff Cowen CHS. by Albert Bailey, who was on the Wild West Show Concert of this circus 1913 - 14 and 15.

This overland wagon show was put out on the road and owned by "Hi Bob" Russell, an old time circus clown and juggler. It opened on the first day of April at Sebrell, Va., and was out until the tenth day of January of the next year, a very long season.

There were two very unusual facts about this mud show, one was; that in all its long season it did not go out of the State of Virginia, and the other was; that there was no power, motors, or machinery of any sort except that which was furnished by the men, mules and horses.

Travelling cross country and playing in small villages, cross roads, blacksmith shops and the like, the circus folk once saw two weeks go by without seeing a railroad.

Very little is remembered about the acts or the performers on this show, however a parade was given daily with two light cage wagons drawn by one horse each, ponies, horses and mules and a manually operated calliope or organ mounted on a light wagon pulled by one horse.

When the parade was concluded the wagon with the organ was put inside the main tent and a long handle was extended through the canvas through a specially cut hole. Thereafter throughout the performance workmen took turns furnishing the juice or power for the music from the outside. For illumination the show had old time carbide lamps to light the evening performance.

The rolling stock consisted of a ticket wagon with a two horse team, a pole wagon with a four or six horse team (depending on the weather) a cook house wagon pulled by a team of mules, the above mentioned light spring cage wagons drawn by one horse apiece, and a canvas wagon with roll top and sides pulled by a two horse team. There was also a bed wagon or sleeper pulled by one team. One extra snake team was handy for pulling in mud.

This was a one ring circus with a sixty foot top. Albert Bailey had the Wild West after show and featured fancy roping and whip cracking.

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TROUPING  
ON THE OLD SHOWS

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Harry P. Parkhurst, well known ex-trouper of Peru, Ind., writes as follows: "I had a great uncle Sylvester Parkhurst, who travelled with wagon shows through the East. He was with Cooper & Whitby and the Sloat Shepard Circus. Then my father, W.B. Parkhurst, better known among circus folks as Bandwagon Dad, travelled with G.G. Grady, Van Amburg, Cooper & Jackson, Montgomery Queen, Miles Orton, Burr Robbins, Wallace & Co., and J. H. LaPearl. Dad drove the bandteam when the Wallace & Co. first opened in Peru, Ind., in the Spring of 1884. My father's brother travelled with the G.G. Grady, Van Amburg and Wallace & Co., shows. My brother Henry E. Parkhurst (Better known as Doc) was on the Miles Organ, Cooper & Jackson, Sells Bros., Burr Robbins, W.W. Cole, Bob Hunting, Fisher & Akin, J. H. LaPearl, Gollmar Bros., John Robinson, Wood Bros. Dog & Pony Show, Frank A. Robbins, Norris & Rowe, Sipe Dallman and Blake Dog & Pony Show. As for myself - I trouped on the Great Wallace Circus, Siebert & Darry, W. D. Reynolds, Adam Forepaugh, Barnum & Bailey, W. L. Main, J. H. LaPearl, John Robinson, Campbell Bros., and other small shows. Then my son Harry Jr. became a circus decorator. I really think that is enough circus in one family".

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Don't you think that is some record for one family. Many unusual titles are mentioned in these lists of names, and they should give members "something to hunt for".

July 15th, 1945.

TWO HEMISPHERES BANDWAGON DIVISION CHS - SPONSORS COMBINED  
C.F.A., C.M.D.O.A. AND C.H.S. CIRCUS CONVENTION

On May 27th, the Two Hemispheres Bandwagon sponsored the first annual C.F.A., C.M.D.O.A. and C.H.S. Circus Convention in New England. An attendance of twenty seven members was considered successful considering the present times.

The members began to arrive shortly after nine thirty in the meeting room of the Hotel Manager, Boston, Mass. This hotel being in the same building as the Boston Gardens was a most typical place for such a meeting.

At Ten A.M. the meeting was called to order and a formal introduction was given -- by all members present giving their names and the organizations they belonged to. Following this, a welcome to the Convention was given by the Driver of the Two Hemispheres Bandwagon, Maurice Allaire. Mr. Stanley Woodward, Pres. of the C.M.D.O.A. gave word to the convention for the Circus Fans of America. A formal discussion, also given as open to all members, took in all fields of the three organizations. The chief topic was "a closer relationship between the organizations in New England". At the close of the discussion period, it was voted that this Convention hereafter would be an annual affair.

Next in line, movies were shown to the members and were very interesting. These movies were loaned to the Convention by Father Ed. Sullivan, CFA and by Wm. Day, also C.F.A. Father Sullivan's movies were of Sarasota, Fla., winter quarters at training time, also showing various parts of the winter quarters and the Ringling Estate. Mr. Day's movies were of the unloading of the Ringling-Barnum circus in Hartford, Conn., 1944. These were interesting showing various stages of unloading and putting up the circus city. Both movies were in colors.

The meeting was then closed and all members had lunch and made ready to attend the afternoon showing of the Big Show. Many members went to the rear of the Boston Gardens to take photos of the old time parade wagons which were on the outside. The conditions for taking photos was excellent.

The show started at two fifteen and all members were together in choice seats of the reserve section of the Gardens. John Crowley made this possible by purchasing all tickets ahead thus giving the members group seats.

After the show, the members went for their evening lunch, gave their final parting chatter, and this ended the first annual combined circus convention for New England. Great credit was given to John Crowley who acted as Master of Ceremonies and Chairman to the Convention.

Those present at the convention were Maurice Allaire, CHS, CMDOA; John Crowley CFA, CHS, CMDOA; Dr. Olzendam, CFA, CHS; L. Ulrich CAF; Mr. Kinball, guest; John Brown CHS; Mr. Knox, guest; John Kreis, CFA (Old Barnum performer); Joe Beach, CFA, CHS; Mr. Sullivan CFA; W. Fulton White CHS, CMDOA; Allen Wescott, CHS; Chas. Dovett, CFA, CHS, CMDOA; James McKenna CHS, CMDOA; Bill Donahue, CMDOA (Regional Director); Paul Horsman CMDOA; Stanley Woodward, Pres. CMDOA; Lawrence Brown, CFA, CHS; J. Hoye, CFA; Wm. Day, CFA; F. Laccouline, CMDOA; Lawrence Butler CHS, CMDOA; S. Osborne, CMDOA; Mr. and Mrs. Morton Leach, CMDOA; H. Peverly, CFA and M. Cakes, CFA.

IN MEMORY OF  
JAMES V. CHLCUPEK  
Member CHS - Director Div. 8.  
Date of Death June 10th, 1945.

"Jim will be sadly missed by many who knew him so well"

RM

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3-14-76